

CIA Denies Use of Small Nuclear Weapons at Peary

WILLIAMSBURG (UPI)—A Central Intelligence Agency spokesman denied Wednesday allegations that mini-nuclear weapons were used in CIA training programs at Camp Peary near here or in any other agency training program.

The CIA spokesman's comment came after a story published by the Virginia Gazette, a weekly newspaper, here, about operations at Camp Peary, a secrecy-clouded Department of Defense installation. The Gazette said the base is actually a CIA training camp and has been for years.

The Gazette said its report was based on about four weeks of investigation by two staff members. The base was acquired 21 years ago by the Defense Department and labeled "an Armed Forces Experimental Training Activity" base.

Much of the newspaper's story was based on an interview with Joe Maggio, who said he was a former CIA operative with the Agency's Covert Special Operations Division. Maggio has written a novel about the CIA, entitled "Company Man." In the book he mentioned activities at a "Camp Perry." He told the newspaper the section on "Camp Perry" actually referred to the "Camp Peary" in York County.

The Gazette said its information from Maggio "indicates that the training methods and techniques covered by the CIA at Camp Peary include assassination training, demolition training, parachute training, courses in wiretapping and intelligence gathering and experiments with special weapons for use in the field, including what Maggio labeled as 'mini-nuclear bombs.'"

The CIA Spokesman "unequivocally" denied that the agency trained for or engaged in an assassination operations.

"The allegation about mini-nuclear weapons in any CIA training program or use by the Agency is utterly untrue," the spokesman added.

The spokesman also said Maggio had been "fired for cause from a Central Intelligence Training Program."

Maggio, 34, told the Gazette he was fired from the CIA in 1967 because he was doing some free lance writing while employed by the agency. He said his dismissal had nothing to do with performance of his CIA duties.

Maggio also told the Gazette he was "never in a position of responsibility" with the CIA, but spent a total of six months in training with the Agency at Camp Peary.